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EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYABILITY IN THE HEALTH TOURISM INDUSTRY: A CONTRIBUTION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSES TO SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract. Along with the growing demands on the tourism and hospitality market, soft skills have been increasingly stated as the main prerequisites for employability. Therefore, this study set out to investigate the health tourism students' perceptions of the soft skills they possess with an emphasis on the contribution of English language courses to their development. The data were collected employing the tailor-made questionnaire which addressed 12 soft skills deemed the most necessary for the inclusion in the (health) tourism labour market. Students perceived their soft skills to be at an average to a moderately high level of development. Likewise, an average to a moderately high level of the contribution of English language instruction was noted. These findings indicate that there is much room for improvement and can be informative for various stakeholders in the education process. On the one hand, the study has revealed that the language courses have a favourable impact on soft skills development, and on the other, it has produced a relatively good representation of the enhancements to be made in this regard.

Introduction

The profound societal and industry changes the world has been experiencing in the past decades have greatly affected all aspects of life, which in turn has reflected in educational institutions. Their orientation has increasingly been shifting from providing academic or technical knowledge of the subject matter to equipping students to cope with the ever-increasing nature of the working environment in the global context. As a result, the competencies and skills which will not only boost the students' capacity of life-long learning but also allow them prompt employment have been brought into focus. Few educational practitioners would contradict the claim that the desired outcome of learning and teaching should be viewed in relation to employability, the term coined to denote an "individual's ability to gain and maintain an initial employment, and to obtain new employment, if required, within an industry" (Wakelin-Theron, 2014, p. 2)³. Although the emphasis placed on employability has been evident globally since the 1990s, much confusion is still related to the skills sought in new graduates.

Employability and Soft Skills

The changed educational paradigm has led to the proliferation of terminology and an array of the definitions applied to the used terms. Most frequently, the distinction is made between hard skills and soft skills. Hard skills relate to the technical expertise and (academic) knowledge. These are the tangible skills, typically learnt at school and made practical use of at work (Arat, 2014, p. 46), which are easily observed and measured (UNESCO-IBE, 2013, p. 29). In contrast, soft skills seem more elusive. Broadly conceived, they are related to interpersonal qualities, i.e., people skills and personal attributes (Robles, 2012). In relevant literature, the term soft skills indicates "a set of intangible personal qualities, traits, attributes, habits, and attitudes that can be used in

³ For an extensive discussion, see Petrova (2015).

many different types of jobs” (UNESCO-IBE, 2013, p. 53). Besides this, equally broad denominations are also frequently used to designate more or less the same competency area. In Europe, they are also referred to as social skills, transversal competencies, social competencies, generic competencies, key competencies, 21st-century skills, skills for social progress, or basic and life skills (see Cinque, 2016). Another synonymous term frequently featuring as well (Ogbeide, 2006; Petrova, 2015; Wakelin-Theron, 2014), employability skills, brings to the fore a close link between soft skills and employment. Regardless of the terminology inconsistencies and accompanying variations in taxonomies, the consensus is that soft skills are of crucial importance for entering the industry market, productive performance, and career success (see Robles, 2012), hence researchers from various fields point to the necessity of soft skills attainment during students’ university time (Bartel, 2018; Schulz, 2008).

Education for Employability in the Health Tourism Study Programme in Serbia in regard to ESP

In line with general trends and a current European educational paradigm, in particular, Serbian educational policy favours a competency-based approach. As regards tertiary level, two tendencies are evident: the focus on employability which would in turn contribute to the country’s economy and higher prosperity, on the one hand, and the emergence of new educational programmes, on the other. The implementation of dual education testifies to the former, whereas the undergraduate study programme of Health Tourism is a clear example of the latter.

Due to a well-documented rise of the tourism and hospitality industry, this sector has become increasingly appealing, so that various study programmes, mostly oriented towards management in the field, have been launched in numerous educational institutions (see Petrova, 2015; Wilks & Hemsworth, 2012). Accordingly, faculties in Serbia have been introducing new programmes that will enable graduates to pursue careers in this industry. Since Serbia boasts abundant natural resources providing ample opportunity for the country to become a distinctive health tourism destination, this sub-sector of the tourism industry⁴ has been recognised as a high-potential contributor to the entire economy of the country. In boosting its development and keeping pace with a rapid growth of health tourism worldwide, qualified well-educated professionals have a major role. For these reasons, the academic undergraduate programme of Health Tourism was established at the Faculty of Hotel Management and Tourism in Vrnjačka Banja in the academic year 2016/17. Striving to meet the

⁴ Health tourism is generally considered a sector comprising medical, wellness, and spa tourism (Mainil et al., 2018).

requirements set upon by a globalised volatile health tourism market and rapid anticipated changes in its development, the curriculum is organised around the combination of lectures, exercises, and hands-on experience with the primary aim to educate competent managers in the industry equipped with sufficient knowledge, both theoretical and practical. Because of the criticality of proficiency in English for the successful performance in the tourism industry (see Radovanović and Pešić, 2017), one-semester compulsory English courses are scheduled in all four years of the undergraduate programme. Given a clear focus on the particular field of study, the essential principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)⁵ theory and practice underlie making decisions on the syllabi design and teaching methodology. In brief, the overall goal of English for Health Tourism (EHT) instruction is to furnish students with linguistic tools and skills to use English efficiently at future workplaces in health tourism destinations both in Serbia and abroad.

Soft Skills for the Health Tourism Industry

To provide a structure for the study and design a research instrument, the relevant literature was surveyed to pinpoint the soft skills typically required for inclusion and success in the health tourism labour market at all employment levels. Since the research related to the skills for the sub-sector of our interest is practically non-existent, the study drew on the significant findings pertaining to general tourism and/or hospitality industry. This seemed justifiable for developing the theoretical basis to address the research questions since health tourism is a multifaceted niche with numerous miscellaneous job prospects. Namely, the graduates are prospective employees of the establishments and organisations belonging to the accommodation sector in health tourism destinations, the travel organisers' sector engaged in travelling for medical and/or spa and wellness purposes and the destination organisation sector.

Judging from the available studies, along with the literature reviews presented therein, the issue of relevant skills and competencies for efficient performance in the tourism and hospitality industry has been receiving increasing attention. With primary aims to specify the skills required by the industry and/or deal with the modes of their development, the researchers adopted various approaches, thereby resorting to different methodologies and the manners of clustering the skills. While earlier research largely focused on employers' perspective, mainly addressing the requirements for managerial positions, in recent decades the attention has been turned to the students' self-assessment of the

⁵ According to a widely-quoted definition, "ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 19).

most relevant skills and competencies (Breen et al., 2004; Ogbeide, 2006). Due to the considerable divergences in scholars' main orientations, the main impression is that the literature provides neither an exclusive clear-cut picture nor an exhaustive and definite list of the most relevant skills for the industry. Notably, offered taxonomies vary widely in the number of examined and identified skills and sub-skills. In this regard, the research set within the field of social sciences favouring a general approach based on organisational theory seems to stand out for its comprehensiveness. Relying on the Competing Values Framework⁶ as a tool for surveying key tourism and hospitality management competencies, Breen et al. (2004) identified 24 key competencies based on 117 statements describing a variety of skills associated with managerial work. Narrowing the scope to the hospitality industry only, the researchers have identified various skills considered important by the industry recruiters such as leadership, employee relations, and problem resolution (Wood, 2005), as well as communication skills and conflict management skills (Ogbeide, 2006). In a similar vein, it has been pointed out that students should have more problem-solving skills, learning skills, technology, data collection and analysis, languages, management and leadership skills so as to match the standards of the industry for the hospitality graduates' skills (Alhelalat, 2015).

The research focused on the tourism managers' perceptions of the skills and attributes that best equip tourism education graduates for employment (Wang et al., 2009) deserves a special mention since it was carried out among industry managers working in seven sectors⁷ which largely correspond to the prospective workplaces of health tourism students when situated and/or related to health tourism destinations. According to the findings, the top three important attributes are oral communication, relationship management skills, and work ethics (Wang et al., 2009). Also, of interest are the outcomes of the Tourism Education Futures Initiative dealing with the ways of building the capacity for tourism students to lead the industry into the future, 2010–2030 (Sheldon et al., 2008). Drawing on what a group comprising 45 experienced tourism educators and industry experts regarded as being important for future students to master, the authors singled out five categories of skills: destination stewardship skills; political skills; ethical skills; enhanced human resource skills; and dynamic business skills (Sheldon et al., 2008).

Notwithstanding notable differences, soft skills, as defined above, come up repeatedly in these discussions. The summary of the competencies identified by various scholars as important for hospitality and tourism graduates

⁶ Originally it contained 250 competencies linked to 8 manager roles.

⁷ Accommodation, transportation, travel agency and tour operator services, café and restaurant/food and beverage, conference and events, government and non-government organisation, and others.

offered by Nolan et al. (2010, pp. 435–436) testifies to their vital importance as it comprises: customer/guest relations; professionalism; employee relations; and leadership. Motivated by an evident lack of a comprehensive list of relevant soft skills, Weber, Finley, Crawford, and Rivera (2009) set out to identify those needed in entry-level hospitality management positions. Among the skills corresponding to those in the human, conceptual, leadership, and interpersonal categories, the authors have singled out the following: working effectively with employees and customers; setting a positive example; displaying honesty/commitment; and developing creative solutions to problems (Weber et al., 2009). The research among tourism employers occupying different positions in five countries (Lūka, 2015) has revealed that they highly evaluate foreign language skills, as well as team working, presentation skills, leadership, collaboration skills, and intercultural competencies.

The components frequently surfacing through literature survey informed the research instrument. Since it is not unlikely that the fresh graduates will be employed at managerial positions right after graduation, we devised a list of 12 soft skills, broadly falling into three categories, typically deemed the most relevant for employability in the (health) tourism industry, as presented in detail in the findings. It should be noted that our list deviates slightly from the above-mentioned models in respect of empathy. Although this personality trait does not feature in the surveyed literature, empathy is included in our survey because it is not only required in health-related occupations but it also benefits leadership/management execution (Holt & Marques, 2012).

The Rationale and Aims of the Study

On account of the specifics of tourism, soft skills are of paramount importance in this ‘people industry’, as outlined below. However, prior studies point to the tourism and hospitality graduates’ lack of relevant skills (Wakelin-Theron, 2014) and reveal the discrepancies between educational undergraduate study programmes content on offer and the industry’s actual needs (Alhelalat, 2015; Nolan et al., 2010; Petrova, 2015; Wilks & Hemsworth, 2012; Wang et al., 2009), particularly in terms of ineffectiveness of soft skills development (Arat, 2014; Wakelin-Theron, 2014).⁸

In the light of the above, this preliminary study focuses on the development of soft skills for the health tourism industry. Building on the previous research undertaken under the broad remit of soft skills for the tourism industry, the aim of the study is twofold. Firstly, given the previous findings providing evidence

⁸ Similar observations have been made in relation to other fields as well. The complaint that university graduates frequently lack soft skills may, in fact, be taken as a commonplace (see Tevdovska, 2015, pp. 97–99).

that self-assessment/evaluation methods are an effective tool for yielding valuable insights into the students' skills development (see Breen et al., 2004), the study aims to investigate students' self-evaluation of the soft skills required for employability in this industry. Secondly, it seeks to shed light on the intertwining of EHT instruction and soft skills acquisition. Concerning skills development, the significance of ESP courses is typically seen in relation to the language skills development. As for English for Tourism Purposes, the instruction is based on the enhancement of all four language skills, both productive and receptive, yet, with a greater focus placed on those regarded as the most necessary ones, i.e., spoken skills (Radovanović & Pešić, 2017; Vuković Vojnović, 2013). The significance of English language skills for employability in various sub-sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry worldwide has been stressed (Kostić-Bobanović & Gržinić, 2011; Prachanant, 2012; Simion, 2012) to the extent that a good command of English may even be regarded as a hard skill in this context.⁹ Stemming from the research stating the importance of soft skills in the context of the English language learning and providing arguments in favour of including soft skills in the classroom (Abbas, 2013; Bartel, 2018; Tevdovska, 2015), the study intends to discuss soft skills in relation to the EHT teaching and learning. Considering recent research informing us that ESP courses can be tailored towards intensive practising soft skills, thereby providing ample opportunities for their development (Hradilová, 2018; Lūka, 2015), the research aims to examine the students' perceptions regarding the contribution of EHT instruction in this respect.

More specifically, the research addresses the questions of to what extent the students, prospective health tourism employees, 1) rate themselves as already possessing the soft skills needed for the health tourism industry and 2) rate the EHT courses held at the Faculty as a contributor to their development. Apart from being justifiable on practical grounds as it may yield some practical implications, this research is justified on theoretical grounds. On the one hand, it could cover some research gaps related to the skills required for this sub-sector and add to the rare studies on soft skills for the tourism industry in Serbia. On the other, it may contribute to the research from the field of applied linguistics addressing soft skills.

Participants

To investigate the perceptions of pre-identified 12 soft skills, in December 2018, a survey was carried out among the students of the first generation that enrolled in the Health Tourism study programme in Vrnjačka Banja, at the time, in the

⁹ As regards hard and soft skills demarcation, it should be kept in mind that a soft skill in one field might be considered a hard skill in some other(s) (Schulz, 2008).

third year of their studies. They were recruited to participate since the data obtained would not only allow for directing focus on the skills worth improving during the students' final year of study but also it could provide informative insights on how to better address these skills with younger students. Of the total of 24 students, 19 voluntarily took part in the survey, giving a response rate of 79.17%. All of them were 21 and had some previous working experience, including internship practice. The majority of respondents were female (66.67%).

Instrument and Methods

The students' perceptions were examined quantitatively and qualitatively through survey research. The study employed the tailor-made questionnaire which had closed-ended questions and contained three parts. Following Part I, requesting the characteristics of the respondents, the two other parts, which comprised the same set of 32 randomly ordered statements describing skills and personal attributes, each linked to one of the soft skills, enquired into students' perceptions. Both applied a five-point Likert-type scale. Part II asked students to assess the extent to which, in their own opinion, they already possess the skills/personal attributes (5-high level, 4-moderately high level, 3-average level, 2-low level and 1-no level). In Part III, the students were to rate the extent to which, in their opinion, EHT courses at the Faculty contributed to the development of the particular skills (5-high level of contribution, 4-moderately high level of contribution, 3-average level of contribution, 2-low level of contribution and 1-no level of contribution).

The questionnaire was delivered via Google Forms and the link was shared with the students via email. The same tool was used for collecting responses in an online spreadsheet and for summarising the results. The average ratings for the investigated items were then combined and categorised according to the soft skills investigated. To facilitate the interpretation of the findings, the total average ratings for the skills and accompanying statements are grouped, based on a broad categorisation, and presented in three tables below.

Findings

The results of the data analysis are presented within three groups: 1) findings concerning the development of cognitive skills, 2) findings concerning the development of interpersonal skills, and 3) findings concerning the development of workplace skills.

Cognitive Skills

Overall, the results indicate that the students perceived their soft skills to be at an average to a moderately high level of development as all average ratings were in the range between 3.49 and 4.00. Similarly, an average to a moderately high level of contribution of EHT instruction was noted, in the 3.40 to 4.12 range. Students viewed their cognitive skills (3.73) as slightly lagging behind the two other categories (3.78 each) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Cognitive skills

Skill	Statement	Development level		EHT contr.	
Decision making	12. I am able to easily identify all relevant facts based on which I make a particular decision.	3.64		3.55	
	9. I am able to consider multiple alternatives before making decisions.	3.64		3.55	
	13. I am able to easily weigh the pros and cons before making a decision	3.91		3.91	
	Σ	3.73		3.67	
Critical thinking and problem-solving	30. When a problem occurs, I am able to easily identify the key features of the problem and consider a broad range of factors.	3.73		3.91	
	32. When dealing with problems, I easily identify the potential options and immediately begin looking for possible solutions and try to solve it in its early stages.	3.73		4.18	
	Σ	3.73		4.05	
	Total		3.73		3.86

Interpersonal Skills

The findings on interpersonal skills, presented in Table 2, are quite revealing in several respects. Firstly, conflict management turns out to be the lowest-rated skill (3.55) not only in this set but in total. The same applies to the rating of EHT courses to its development. Secondly, contrary to our expectations, students do not see themselves as skilled communicators. As Table 2 shows, insufficient competence is perceived with non-verbal communication in particular (3.64), whereas EHT instruction is considered a valuable contributor (3.99) in this regard. The highest contribution to the skills development is recognised with verbal communication (4.12), which is followed by a perceived high impact on developing culture adaptability (4.09).

Table 2. Interpersonal skills

Skill	Statement	Development level		EHT contr.	
Teamwork	2. I am able to adapt to the needs of the group/team and work to collective goals.	4.09		4.00	
	5. I am able to assist and support other team members, as well as take instructions from others.	3.82		4.00	
	25. I prefer learning through collaboration and teamwork to working alone.	3.91		3.73	
	Σ	3.94		3.91	
Conflict management	27. In case of conflicts, I use my communication skills to find solutions and work things out.	3.55		3.91	
	3. I am able to anticipate and predict possible causes of conflicts, and I deal with them in advance.	3.55		3.45	
	10. I am able to deal with criticism constructively.	3.36		3.64	
	Σ	3.49		3.40	
Culture adaptability	19. I am able to work in a culturally diverse work environment (with people of different nationalities, religions, colours).	3.91		4.09	
	8. I am able to consider cultural barriers when planning my communications.	3.82		4.18	
	17. I am able to understand and demonstrate cultural awareness in dealing with others.	3.82		4.00	
	Σ	3.85		4.09	
Empathy	29. In dealing with others, I am able to project in another person and feel what they are feeling.	4.00		4.00	
	20. I am aware of other people's emotions and act accordingly.	3.82		3.45	
	Σ	3.91		3.73	
Verbal communication	7. I am able to clearly communicate my needs, and I make sure that my message is heard and understood.	3.73		4.00	
	4. I am able to ask questions and actively listen to others.	4.09		4.27	
	28. In the case of written communication, I can use appropriate language and formats to make my message understood.	3.64		4.09	
	Σ	3.82		4.12	
Non-verbal communication	26. I rely on body language, facial expressions and gestures to show friendliness and respect in interactions.	3.45		3.82	
	31. When communicating with others, I pay attention to non-verbal signals.	3.82		4.09	
	Σ	3.64		3.99	
		Total	3.78		3.87

Workplace Skills

As regards workplace skills presented in Table 3, information skills stand out as considered the most developed of all investigated in the survey (4.00), although an average level of EHT instruction contribution is noted (3.68). Time management appears to be rather problematic (3.67), especially when it comes to managing workload.

Table 3. Workplace skills

Skill	Statement	Development level		EHT contr.	
Adaptability and flexibility	22. I can easily and creatively adapt to changing circumstances.	3.73		4.00	
	16. I am able to quickly modify my priorities if requested by the situation.	3.82		3.64	
	Σ	3.78		3.82	
Time management	15. I am able to manage my time effectively (meet deadlines, get on time).	4.00		3.64	
	1. I never lose time during the day because I want to complete all of my work in a timely manner.	3.55		3.91	
	24. As regards managing my workload, I know my priorities so I avoid all time-wasters.	3.45		4.00	
	Σ	3.67		3.85	
Presentation skills	11. I am able to deliver good presentations.	4.00		3.55	
	23. I know how to choose visual aids to support my arguments in delivering presentations.	3.45		4.27	
	Σ	3.73		3.91	
Information skills	6. I am able to combine relevant information obtained from multiple sources.	4.09		3.73	
	14. I am able to identify and use appropriate sources of information.	3.73		3.82	
	18. I am able to use electronic communications and data search applications to find necessary information.	4.55		3.82	
	21. I can apply the obtained information to new and broader contexts.	3.64		3.36	
	Σ	4.00		3.68	
		Total	3.78		3.82

Discussion and Implications

The above findings indicate that there is much room for improvement, which does not hold only for the lowest-rated skill (conflict management). Notably communication skills are in need of improvement. Not only are they of utmost importance in the tourism industry (Robles, 2012) since the employees are expected to create and maintain effective rapport and relationships with customers and co-workers, but also these are regarded essential life competencies, regardless of an individual's career level or status (Breen et al., 2004, p. 9).

In general, the research is informative for various stakeholders in the health tourism tertiary education. It is certainly of the greatest benefit to the students. Since “by knowing which soft skills are the most important, an individual can enhance their chances to be recruited” (Weber et al., 2009, p. 359), this research is valuable per se as it provided a positive stimulus for the students to give new consideration to labour market insertion. By being given an opportunity to evaluate and acknowledge their soft skills, the students could reinforce their awareness of the existence and importance of the skills necessary for employability. The findings, in particular, are useful as a valuable indicator of the soft skills they are lacking behind and which should be empowered and enhanced.

Leaving aside the doubt whether soft skills might be trained or should be considered innate (Cinque, 2016) and adopting a position that these can be acquired through education and training (Schulz, 2008), educators could explore innovative ways of promoting the skills that will facilitate students' absorption into the industry. As no soft skill was perceived to be at a high level, it is worth reconsidering the curricula, primarily in terms of selecting adequate ways to foster soft skills, such as implementing different teaching methods and learning methodologies proposed elsewhere (Arat, 2014; Cinque, 2016; Tevdovska, 2015). This applies to EHT instructors as well. As regards EHT contribution, the findings are, in fact, beneficial in two respects. On the one hand, they indicate that the language instruction has a favourable impact on developing soft skills since in the case of 7 soft skills the students' rating of the contribution out-tops the perceived development level of a particular skill, and on the other, they highlight the aspects in need of enhancement. Once being identified, these can be improved by adopting different practical procedures of soft skills inclusion in the language teaching and learning. The possible remedial measures should be considered in terms of their integration in the lessons plans, instructional materials, learning and teaching activities, and the assessment of the students' achievement (Abbas, 2013). Hence, the instructors may make use of some ideas on lesson plans (Bartel, 2018) and other possible ways of embedding soft skills in the classroom (Tevdovska, 2015), as suggested below. Also, the attention should be given to the relevant elements of pragmatics since useful parallels can be drawn between pragmatic competence and competence in soft skills (Bartel, 2018, p. 82).

The perceived level of EHT contribution may be explained by the applied ESP curriculum and syllabus design resting on the communicative approach and embracing student-centeredness (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The curriculum addressing the relevant aspects revealed by the needs analysis and assessment is primarily aimed at systematically educating the students in the skills and knowledge needed not only at the course of study but more importantly in students' prospective careers (Radovanović & Mitrović, 2018; Radovanović & Pešić, 2017). The perception of EHT courses as beneficial to impart critical thinking and problem-solving skills (4.05) is aligned with the previous claim that an ESP classroom is a meaningful educational context for promoting critical thinking instruction (Tuzlukova & Usha-Prabhukanth, 2018). The major contribution viewed with culture adaptability gives further support to the observation that ESP instructors place heavy emphasis on cultural issues (Lūka, 2015).

Since EHT syllabus encompasses the functional skills, the students should master in order to establish effective communication in their prospective workplaces, the instruction by default has significant impacts on communication skills development. Yet, further efforts are needed especially those aimed at boosting non-verbal communication. Various activities in the form of role-plays, simulated dialogues and situations focused on communicative effectiveness in real-world interactions are already given a significant part in a syllabus. However, it appears that the students should be provided with more frequent opportunities to evaluate each other's performance and reflect on their achievements. Further, since the contribution on teamwork skills development could be enhanced, the methods stimulating collaboration, interactivity, and communication have to be promoted, as well as experiential learning through practical activities (Cinque, 2016; Hradilová, 2018). As the ability to understand and relate to others on an emotional level is also a soft skill that can determine the difference between success and failure (Weber et al., 2009, p. 359), empathy rating is promising. However, new ways of promoting this skill could be explored. The significant divergence between the perceived level of development and EHT instruction contribution noted with information skills (4.00 vs. 3.68) can be accounted for by the fact that the respondents belong to digital natives. However, as EHT should adapt to the changing needs of new generations, this gap may be catered for by giving more group project tasks and incorporating Computer-Assisted Language Learning.

Final Remarks

Along with the growing demands of the tourism and hospitality market, soft skills have been increasingly stated as the main prerequisites for employability. Therefore, we set out to investigate the health tourism students' perceived level of soft skills development with a special emphasis on the contribution of EHT

instruction to their development. The study has revealed that EHT instruction has the potential for being an important contributor to soft skills development. The findings have also produced a relatively good representation of the enhancements to be made in this regard.

Several important limitations need to be considered, though. Notably, the number of participants, together with the fact that pinpointing soft skills is by necessity context-dependent, delimits the applicability of the findings. Since this is only a preliminary study, more extensive research should be carried out to substantiate the findings. Besides this, more complex statistical analysis methods could be applied to provide additional insights. Nonetheless, having pointed to an under-investigated area of research, this study may serve as a basis for other studies in different ESP contexts and pave the way for some future research.

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Образовање за запошљивост у индустрији
здравственог туризма: допринос наставе енглеског
језика развоју меких вештина

Резиме

Упоредо са растућим захтевима на тржишту туризма и угоститељства, меке вештине се све чешће наводе као главни предуслови запошљивости. Стога овај рад има за циљ да испита перцепције студената здравственог туризма

о меких вештинама које поседују, са нагласком на доприносу курсева енглеског језика њиховом развоју. Подаци су прикупљени применом упитника усмереног на испитивање 12 меких вештина које се наводе као најпотребније за укључивање на тржиште рада (здравственог) туризма. Према проценама студената, њихове меке вештине су на просечном до умерено високом нивоу развоја. Исто тако, уочен је просечан до умерено висок ниво доприноса наставе енглеског језика. Ови налази указују на то да постоји много простора за побољшање, те због свог информативног карактера могу бити од користи различитим актерима образовног процеса. С једне стране, испитивање је показало да курсеви језика имају благотворан утицај на развијање меких вештина, а с друге стране, омогућило је релативно добар приказ побољшања која у овом погледу ваља начинити.

Кључне речи: меке вештине; индустрија здравственог туризма; енглески језик за потребе здравственог туризма; запошљивост.



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